



⑪ Publication number : 0 633 693 A2

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EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION

⑳ Application number : 94304701.9

⑤① Int. Cl.⁶ : H04N 5/92, H04N 7/26

㉔ Date of filing : 28.06.94

③① Priority : 01.07.93 JP 163418/93
08.07.93 JP 168901/93

④③ Date of publication of application :
11.01.95 Bulletin 95/02

⑥④ Designated Contracting States :
DE FR GB NL

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⑤④ Flagged video signal recording apparatus and reproducing apparatus.

⑤⑦ A video data is accompanied or multiplexed with one or more flags indicating a relation between fields or frames of video data for transmission or recording. An interlace flag determines whether the video data is interlaced or not. A still image flag determines whether the video data carries a motion image, a field still image, or a frame still image. A frame change flag determines whether or not a given frame of the still image is identical to its previous frame. At least one of the three different flags is multiplexed with its relevant video data.

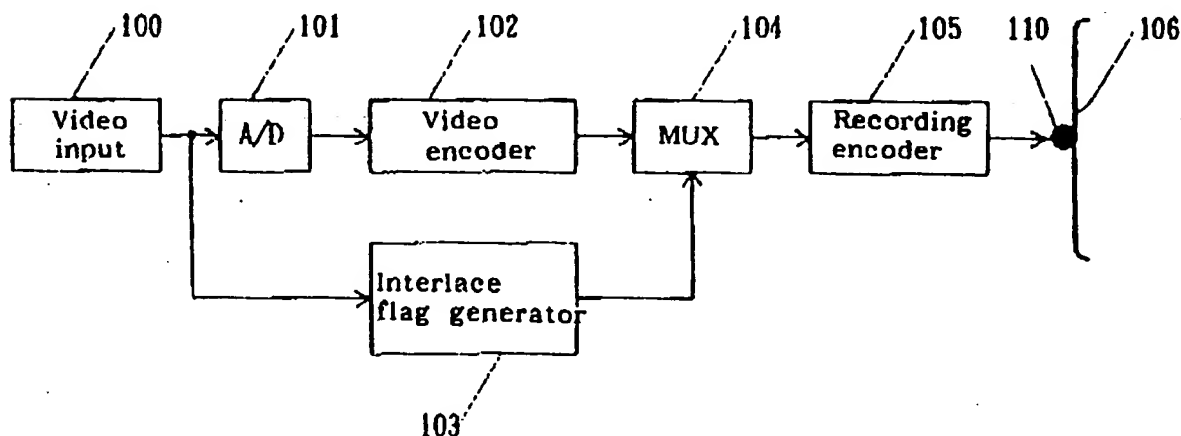


Fig. 1a

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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to a recording apparatus for transmitting or recording a video signal and to a reproducing apparatus for reproducing the video signal.

2. Description of the Prior Art

It is known that the conventional television signals are transmitted or recorded on a frame by frame basis. Each frame comprises two fields in which a horizontal scanning line of one field falls between two adjacent horizontal lines of the other field in the frame. This is called as interlaced scanning.

Accordingly, the video signal is transmitted or recorded as interlaced signals in a video signal transmitting or recording apparatus. For reproduction of the video signal, the two fields are interlaced to one frame. The frame by frame basis recording, transmission, or reproduction is applicable to not only a motion image but also a still or slow-motion image.

However, there are some drawbacks with such conventional video signal recording or reproducing apparatus:

- (1) In common home video game machines, two corresponding horizontal lines of their respective fields of a frame are allocated to the same location on a screen for preventing flicker caused by interlacing of the two fields. They are thus called non-interlaced fields. If such a non-interlaced video signal transmitted or recorded is interlaced in reproduction, it will produce flicker.
- (2) For a still image shot by a camera, each field of its data is temporarily stored in a memory and then transmitted or recorded for a plurality of field periods. Such still image data will also produce flicker when interlaced and reproduced, similar to the non-interlaced signal of the paragraph (1).
- (3) While a recorded TV signal is reproduced in a slow-motion or still mode, a single field of its data is continuously pulled for a plurality of field periods. Such slow-motion or still image data after transmitted or recorded will produce flicker when interlaced and reproduced, as well as the still image data of the paragraph (2).
- (4) If still images and motion images are recorded in a combination, they will hardly be discriminated from each other during the reproduction. Also, it will be difficult to determine whether a still or slow-motion image is reproduced on a frame by frame basis or a field by field basis.
- (5) When an error occurs during the reproduction of a still image, it is generally eliminated by error concealment. However, since two consecutive frames are not always correlated, a technique of

inter-frame concealment can unsuccessfully be used. If the inter-frame concealment is enforced, the quality of a reproduced image may critically be impaired.

(6) When a still image is recorded in multiple frames, it will be hard to identify the starting frame of a succeeding still image and the searching of still images by frames will almost be infeasible.

(7) Any image data which has been reproduced in a slow-motion or still mode and transmitted or recorded will hardly be identified whether it is a common motion image or a slow-motion or still image.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

It is an object of the present invention to provide video signal recording and reproducing apparatuses in which the above drawbacks are eliminated and a video signal can be recorded, transmitted, or reproduced at optimum level depending on its mode.

A video signal recording apparatus according to a first aspect of the present invention comprises: an interlace flag generating means for assigning a non-interlace value to an interlace flag when two horizontal scanning lines of their respective fields of each frame of an input video signal are not interlaced and an interlace value when the same are interlaced; a multiplexing means for multiplexing the interlace flag with its relevant video data to produce a multiplexed video signal; and a means for transferring or recording the multiplexed video signal.

In the operation of the foregoing apparatus, it is examined whether the input video signal is interlaced or not and a resultant information flag is transmitted or recorded together with the video data. For example, if a video signal of a home video game machine is received for reproduction, it can selectively be processed by interlacing or non-interlacing process.

If a video signal of still images which is introduced from a camera has temporarily been stored on a field by field basis in a memory and transmitted or recorded in the form of a series of identical fields, it is identified as a non-interlaced signal. Hence, field data for the still image transmitted and recorded can be reproduced as a non-interlaced image, which does not generate flicker.

Also, when a recorded video data is reproduced field by field in a slow-motion or still image mode and then transmitted or recorded again, it is identified as a non-interlaced signal. The field data in the slow-motion or still image mode will thus be reproduced as a non-interlaced image free from flicker.

A video signal recording apparatus according to a second aspect of the present invention comprises: a still image flag generating means for assigning a still image value to a still image flag when a video

data of a frame of an input video signal is a still image being still over two fields and a motion-image value when it is judged that the same is a motion image moving between two fields; a multiplexing means for multiplexing the still image flag with the video data of the frame to produce a multiplexed video signal; and a means for transmitting or recording the multiplexed video signal.

In the operation, the still image flag is transmitted or recorded together with the video data and used to examine whether the video data carries a still image or a motion image during reproduction on a frame by frame basis. When it is judged that the video data is a still image, the reproducing mode is automatically shifted to a slow-motion or still image mode. When the slow-motion or still image mode is first selected, still image video data is reproduced on a frame by frame basis and motion image video data is reproduced on a field by field basis. If the video data is an interlaced still image, it can be processed frame by frame in the still image mode to reproduce a still image of high quality. If the video data carries a motion image, it can be processed field by field to reproduce a still image having no flicker nor dancing.

For recording a desired still image, at least three identical frames are processed in succession and can thus be prevented from deterioration of the quality during the error concealment. It is known that during recording of video data with a VCR, a record is interrupted between any two still images resulting in higher error rate. According to the present invention, a succession of identical frames permits ease of error concealment between the frames.

A video signal processing apparatus for transmitting or recording a still image according to a third aspect of the present invention comprises: a frame change flag generating means for repeating a frame of a still image for n frame periods (n being an integer more than two) and assigning a different still image value to a frame change flag applied to a first one of the n frames and an identical still image value to the frame change flag applied to each of a second to n -th frames, the frame change flag being indicative of whether the still image frame is identical to or different from a previous frame; a multiplexing means for multiplexing the frame change flag with the video data of the frame to produce a multiplexed video signal; and a means for transmitting or recording the multiplexed video signal.

In the operation, the frame change flag is transmitted or recorded together with the video data and in reproduction, the change from a frame to another is identified by detecting the frame change flag. Thus, the frame-by-frame reviewing will be possible in the still image reproducing mode. Since the frame change flag is indicative of a range of identical frames, the error concealment can be executed between the identical frames of a single still image, thus

preventing any quality deterioration.

Also, during the slow-motion/still image reproducing mode, the frame change flag is applicable to reproduced frames which are then transferred or recorded. Accordingly, the slow-motion/still image mode frames with the frame change flag can easily be discriminated from normal reproducing mode frames.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1a is a block diagram showing a first embodiment of the video signal recording apparatus of the present invention;

Fig. 1b is an explanatory view showing a multiplexed format of the first embodiment;

Fig. 2 is a block diagram of an exemplary arrangement of an interlace flag generator according to the present invention;

Fig. 3 is a block diagram showing a second embodiment of the video signal recording apparatus of the present invention;

Fig. 4 is a block diagram showing a third embodiment of the video signal recording apparatus of the present invention;

Fig. 5 is a block diagram showing a first embodiment of the video signal reproducing apparatus of the present invention;

Fig. 6 is a block diagram of an exemplary arrangement of an output mode selector according to the present invention;

Fig. 7 is a block diagram showing a fourth embodiment of the video signal recording apparatus of the present invention;

Fig. 8 is a block diagram of an exemplary arrangement of a still image flag generator according to the present invention;

Fig. 9 is a block diagram showing a fifth embodiment of the video signal recording apparatus of the present invention;

Fig. 10 is a block diagram showing a sixth embodiment of the video signal recording apparatus of the present invention;

Fig. 11 is a block diagram showing a second embodiment of the video signal reproducing apparatus of the present invention;

Fig. 12 is a block diagram showing a third embodiment of the video signal reproducing apparatus of the present invention; and

Fig. 13 is a block diagram showing a fourth embodiment of the video signal reproducing apparatus of the present invention.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Fig. 1a is a block diagram of a first embodiment of the video signal recording apparatus according to

the present invention. A video signal fed through a video input 100 is converted by an analog-to-digital or AD converter 101 to its digital equivalent. The digital video signal is transmitted to a video encoder 102 and an interlace flag generator 103. The video encoder 102 encodes the digital video signal to a specific format suitable for recording, where the encoding may be carried out using a known video data compression method. The video data compression method allows the digital video signal to be divided into blocks, each block comprising a group of adjacent pixels, and then subjected to orthogonal transformation to produce its data compressed form. At the result of the encoding, the data of the digital video signal is compressed and reduced considerably.

The interlace flag generator 103 examines whether two fields of a frame in the video signal are interlaced or not and produces an interlace flag according to the result of examination.

The interlace flag is then multiplexed with the encoded image data from the video encoder 102 by a multiplexer 104. A resultant composite data is transferred to a recording encoder 105 where it is error collection encoded and frequency encoded before recorded by a magnetic head 110 onto a magnetic recording tape 106.

The multiplexer 104 will now be explained in more details referring to Fig. 1b. Fig. 1b illustrates the allocation of a record with the use of a digital video cassette recorder (DVCR). As shown, denoted by (a) is one of a series of helical recording tracks defined on the magnetic tape by the DVCR which comprises an audio sector for storage of digital audio data, a video sector for storage of digital video data, and control sectors assigned to the front and rear ends of the track for storage of control factors including an index information. The video sector comprises first and second video auxiliary data and a main video data, as shown in (b) of Fig. 1b. The first video auxiliary data includes video sector control data and time codes required for reproduction of the main video data. In particular, the first video auxiliary data contains a flag field as shown in (c) of Fig. 1b. In this flag field, the interlace flag of one bit is followed by a still image flag of one bit and a frame change flag of one bit which both will be described later. Although this embodiment employs three different types of the flags, one or two of them may be used as desired. For increasing the reliability, multiple sets of the three flags may repeatedly be recorded at equal intervals. It should be understood that the format of the recording track is not limited to that shown in Fig. 1b.

As the interlace flag is inserted, the video signal can readily be identified whether it is an interlaced or non-interlaced signal. If the video signal is a non-interlaced signal such as an output of a video game machine, it is not interlaced in reproduction thus preventing the generation of flicker.

Fig. 2 shows an exemplary arrangement of the interlace flag generator 103, in which a video signal output of the video input 100 is fed to a V blanking waveform detector 201 where the waveform of a vertical blanking period is extracted. The waveform is then stored in a memory 202. A vertical blanking waveform of the succeeding field delivered directly from the V blanking waveform detector 201 is compared by a comparator 203 with the waveform of the previous field stored in the memory 202. If the two waveforms are not identical to each other, it is judged that the video signal is an interlaced signal. Accordingly, a flag generator 204 assigns 1 of a binary bit to the interlace flag when the comparator 203 detects the interlaced signal and 0 when it detects a non-interlaced signal.

When the two vertical blanking waveforms of their respective fields are identical, it is determined by the above flag setting arrangement of Fig. 2 that the video signal is a non-interlaced signal such as an output of a video game machine. The flag setting according to the present invention is not limited to the arrangement shown in Fig. 2 and may be executed by any appropriate manner.

Fig. 3 is a block diagram of a second embodiment of the video signal recording apparatus according to the present invention, where a video signal is fed through a camera input 301 and stored in a memory 303. The memory 303 in response to a still image message from a still image button switch 302 mounted to a video camera delivers the video signal to a video encoder 102. The still image button switch 302 allows an operator to determine whether a still picture to be taken is of field or frame format. The still image message is thus indicative of a mode of the video signal fed through the camera input 301: a motion image, a field format still image, or a frame format still image. The field format images are two times greater in number than the frame format images. On the contrary, the frame format images are higher in the quality than the field format images.

When the video signal is a field format still image, the memory 303 delivers data of a desired field to the video encoder 102 for a plurality of field periods. When the video signal is a frame format still image, the memory 303 sends data of one frame to the video encoder 102 for a plurality of frame periods. When the video signal is a motion image, it delivers data of one field for a field period. The video signal is compressed and encoded by the video encoder 102 to its recording form.

The still image message from the still image switch 302 is also transferred to an interlace flag generator 304. When the field format still image is detected, the interlace flag is set to 0 for non-interlacing. When the frame format still image or motion image is introduced, the interlace flag is set to 1.

The interlace flag is multiplexed by a multiplexer 104 with the encoded video signal from the video en-

coder 102. A resultant composite signal is subjected to error concealment and frequency encoding processes in a recording encoder 105 for converting to a recording format signal suitable for magnetic recording through a record head 110 onto a magnetic tape 106.

In common, if the field format still image is interlaced in reproduction, it will oscillate vertically between fields producing a so-called dancing effect. According to the foregoing arrangement shown in Fig. 3, when the input video signal carries a succession of identical field image data, it is not interlaced to avoid the dancing effect during the reproduction. The camera input 301 is not limited to the receipt of a video camera signal but may be connected to any still image producing apparatus.

Fig. 4 illustrates a third embodiment of the video signal recording apparatus according to the present invention, in which a recorded video data is reproduced and recorded again. In a reproducing unit of the apparatus, the video data stored on a magnetic tape 400 is retrieved with a playback head 120 and reconstructed with a reproducer 401. Simultaneously, the reproducer 401 delivers to a reproducing mode output 402 a playback information of common motion, slow-motion, or still image mode reproduction. The reproducing mode output 402 determines the reproducing mode from the tape feed movement and the result of a process in the reproducer 401.

The video data reconstructed by the reproducing unit is then transferred to a video encoder 102 where it is compressed and encoded to its recording form.

Similarly, a reproducing mode signal from the reproducing mode output 402 is transmitted to an interlace flag generator 403 where when the video data is a slow-motion or still field image, an interlace flag is set to "0" for non-interlacing and when not, an interlace flag is set to "1" for interlacing.

The interlace flag is multiplexed by a multiplexer 104 with the video data from the video encoder 102.

A resultant composite data is subjected to error correction and frequency encoding processes in a recording encoder 105 for converting to a recording format signal suitable for magnetic recording through a record head 110 onto a magnetic tape 106.

Equally in this arrangement, when the video data is a succession of identical fields in a slow-motion or still image mode, it is not interlaced in reproduction to prevent the dancing effect. It is also possible that if the video data is an encoded form, it is bypassed without passing across the video encoder 102.

Fig. 5 shows a first embodiment of the video signal reproducing apparatus according to the present invention, in which the video data recorded by one of the video signal recording apparatuses shown in Figs. 1, 3, and 4 is reproduced. The video signal retrieved by a playback head 120 from a magnetic tape 106 is demodulated, reshaped, and error corrected by a de-

coder 501. A resultant decoded digital data is separated by an interlace flag separator 502 into a video data and an interlace flag. The video data is decoded on a field by field basis by a video decoder 504 and fed to an output mode selector 505.

The interlace flag is transferred to an interlace flag detector 503 where it is examined to determine whether or not the video data is an interlaced signal. If the video signal is an interlaced signal, the video data is subjected to interlacing by the output mode selector 505 and transmitted to a video output 506. If not, the video data is not interlaced across the output mode selector 505 and delivered to the video output 506.

Accordingly, the video data will be reproduced in the same mode as of the recording thus causing no dancing effect and no flicker. It would be understood that the non-interlaced video signal is applicable to any other enhancement process for optimum output.

Fig. 6 is a block diagram showing an exemplary arrangement of the output mode selector 505 shown in Fig. 5. As shown, the video signal decoded by the video decoder 504 is fed to a selector 602 and an interline filter 604. The interline filter 604 performs interline filtering so that two scanning lines of their respective fields of the video signal are interlaced. If the video signal is interlaced, the selector 602 transmits directly the video data from the video decoder 504 to the video output 506 in response to a mode information output of the interlace flag detector 503. If the video signal carries a non-interlaced data, it is passed through the interline filter 604 for interlacing action before delivering to the video output 506.

According to the arrangement shown in Fig. 6, since the non-interlaced signal is subjected to the interlacing action of the interline filter 604, it will be delivered as an interlaced signal with no dancing effect.

Fig. 7 illustrates a fourth embodiment of the video signal recording apparatus according to the present invention, where a video signal fed to a camera input 302 is transmitted to a memory 702. When a still image is desired, a still image button-switch 701 mounted to a camera is pressed. Then, a mode signal of 0 is fed from the still image button-switch 701 to the memory 702 and a still image flag generator 703. When a motion image is requested, a mode signal of 1 is released from the still image button-switch 703. In synchronization with the mode signal from the still image button-switch 701, the memory 702 delivers the video data of a motion image on a frame by frame basis to a video encoder 102. If the memory 702 receives the signal of a still image, it delivers a succession of identical frames.

The video data is then compressed and encoded by the video encoder 102 to its recording form which is transferred to a multiplexer 104. The still image flag generator 703 produces a still image flag of 0 when the video data is a still image and of 1 when it is a mo-

tion image. The still image flag is also fed to the multiplexer 104.

The multiplexer 104 combines the encoded video data from the video encoder 102 with the still image flag from the still image flag generator 703. A resultant composite signal is subjected to error concealment and frequency encoding processes of a recording encoder 105 for converting to a recording signal suitable for magnetic recording through a record head 110 onto a magnetic tape 106.

According to the arrangement, a motion image of the video signal is recorded on a frame by frame basis while a still image of the same is recorded by repeating a desired frame. The discrimination of a still image from a motion image or vice versa can thus be made on the reproduction side by examining the still image flag. The repeating of any still image frame may be predetermined to a desired number of times as is possible for recording one frame only.

Fig. 8 is a block diagram of an exemplary arrangement of the still image flag generator 703, in which an image mode signal from the still image button-switch 701 is temporarily stored in a memory 801. An image mode signal of the present frame newly delivered from the still image button-switch 701 is compared by a comparator 802 with the image mode signal of the preceding frame stored in the memory 801. If the two image mode signals are not identical to each other, a frame counter 804 is reset to 0. It is noted that the resetting is carried out after counting to 2 or more. As the frame counter 804 counts up frame by frame, it sends to an image mode selector 803 as a count the number of frames, generally (n)-1, after change of the image mode. If the count of the frame counter 804 is less than 2, the image mode selector 803 delivers from an output 805 a flag of the same image mode as of the previous frame. If the count is 2 or more, the image mode selector 803 delivers a flag of the image mode of the present frame.

More specifically, when three or more frames are not input in a sequence after change of the image mode, the image mode flag cannot be shifted. This means that at least three continuous frames are recorded in the still image mode.

According to the arrangement shown in Fig. 8, the still image flag prohibits any single frame from isolating between different still or motion image frames. If the recording is interrupted frame by frame in common VCRs, the error rate about the interruption will increase. In the still image recording mode, different still images are introduced before and after the interruption and error between frames will hardly be corrected. In this embodiment, the change of the image mode is properly controlled thus ensuring optimum recording and reproduction of still images.

Fig. 9 shows a fifth embodiment of the video signal recording apparatus according to the present invention. A digital video signal fed to a camera input

301 is temporarily stored in a memory 702. As a still image button-switch 701 is activated, a resultant frame change signal representing the change to a new still image frame is transmitted to the memory 702 and to a frame change flag generator 903. More specifically, when the still image button-switch 701 is pressed once, a frame of a desired still image is recorded and when pressed again, a frame of the succeeding still image is recorded.

The memory 702 in response to the frame change signal from the still image button-switch 701 (indicating the change of a still image between present and succeeding frames) delivers video data of the succeeding frame to video encoder 102. If the two frames are identical, video data of the present frame is repeatedly transferred from the memory 702 to the video encoder 102.

The video data is then compressed and encoded by the video encoder 102 to a recording signal which is fed to a multiplexer 104. The frame change flag generator 903 produces a frame change flag as "0" when the two consecutive frames are identical (having the same still image) and as "1" when they are not identical (carrying different still images). The frame change flag is also fed to the multiplexer 104.

The encoded video data from the video encoder 102 is multiplexed by the multiplexer 104 with the frame change flag from the frame change flag generator 903. A resultant composite signal is subjected to encoding of a recording encoder 105 for converting to a format signal suitable for magnetic recording by a record head 110 onto a magnetic tape 106.

Accordingly, the change of a still image from one frame to the other will successfully be detected by examining the frame change flag.

Fig. 10 illustrates a sixth embodiment of the video signal recording apparatus according to the present invention, where a recorded video data is reproduced and then recorded again. In a reproducing unit, a video data is retrieved by a playback head 120 from a magnetic tape 400 and processed with a processor 401. Simultaneously, a reproducing mode signal indicating the reproduction of a slow-motion or still image is released from a reproduction mode output 402 which determines and produces the mode signal by examining the tape feed movement and the processing action of the processor 401. The change to a new frame in the slow-motion mode is also detected by the reproduction mode output 402.

The video data reconstructed in the reproducing unit is then fed to a video encoder 102 where it is compressed and encoded to a recording signal. The frame change signal from the reproduction mode output 402 is fed to a frame change flag generator 903. In common reproduction of a motion image data, the entire frames are different from each other. In the slow-motion or still image mode, a group of identical frames constitutes a part of a slow-motion image or

a still image and thus, two consecutive frames are either identical or different. The frame change flag generator 903 produces a frame change flag as "0" when the two consecutive frames are identical and as "1" when they are not identical. The frame change flag is then fed to a multiplexer 104.

The encoded video data from the video encoder 102 is multiplexed by the multiplexer 104 with the frame change flag from the frame change flag generator 903. A resultant composite signal is subjected to encoding of a recording encoder 105 for converting to a format signal suitable for magnetic recording by a record head 110 onto a magnetic tape 106.

Accordingly, when the video data is a slow-motion or still image, a series of identical frames are recorded for a plurality of frame periods. This mode is detected by examining the frame change flag and the common motion image and the slow-motion or still image will clearly be discriminated from each other.

Fig. 11 shows a second embodiment of the video signal reproducing apparatus according to the present invention and will be explained in respect to reproduction of the video data recorded with the recording apparatus of the present invention shown in Fig. 9 or 10. The video data retrieved by a playback head 120 from the magnetic tape 106 is decoded by a decoder 501 to its digital form. The decoded video data is then divided by a frame change flag separator 1101 into a video signal and a frame change flag. The video signal is transferred to an error concealment 1103 and the frame change flag is fed to a frame change flag detector 1102 where it is examined whether two, previous and present, frames are identical or not.

The error concealment 1103 replaces missing data in the reproduced video signal by interpolation. In common still image mode, the previous and present frames are identical having the same data and a dropout in the present frame is interpolated with corresponding data of the previous frame. If the two frames are different from each other, such interpolation is not applicable. In this case, the dropout may be replaced with a similar data of any adjacent frame.

When the previous and present frames are identical, the error concealment 1103 corrects a data dropout in the present frame by interpolation. If the present frame is not identical to the previous frame, the error concealment 1103 interpolates the dropout using not data from the previous frame but a corresponding data from any adjacent similar frame.

A resultant corrected data of the error concealment 1103 is then decoded by a video decoder 504 and delivered from a video output 506.

The error concealment is carried out by interpolation with data in an identical or similar frame according to the frame change flag. Hence, unwanted artifacts resulting from the error concealment will be minimized. For recording of a still image, a series of

the identical frames are used and error correction between the frames of the still image will be feasible. It is understood that if error correction in one still image fails to execute between its identical frames, it will be implemented using similar data of the frames of another still image.

Although the error concealment is followed by the decoding of the video data in the embodiment of Fig. 11, it may be carried out after the decoding.

Fig. 12 shows a third embodiment of the video signal reproducing apparatus according to the present invention, in which the video data recorded with the recording apparatus of the present invention shown in Fig. 9 or 10 is reproduced. The video data retrieved by a playback head 120 from the magnetic tape 106 is decoded by a decoder 501 to its digital form. The decoded video data is then divided by a frame change flag separator 1101 into a video signal and a frame change flag. While the video signal is transferred to a memory 1202, the frame change flag is fed to a frame change flag detector 1102 where it is examined whether two, previous and present, frames are identical or not.

A mode signal from a still image selector switch 1203 determined by an operator of the apparatus is indicative of either the present or succeeding still image being reproduced. When the present still image is requested, the frames of the present still image stored in the memory 1202 is continuously invoked and transferred to a video decoder 504. When the succeeding still image is wanted, the magnetic tape 106 is advanced to the address of a succeeding still image data by control with a tape feed controller 1201. The retrieval of the succeeding still image data is also determined by the frame change flag detector 1102. More specifically, the frame change flag detector 1102 can identify a location between two not-identical frames where the data of the succeeding still image starts. According to the mode signal of the still image selector switch 1203 and the resultant output of the frame change flag detector 1102, the tape feed controller 1201 determines the feeding of the magnetic tape.

The retrieved still image data is fed through the memory 1202 to the video decoder 504 where it is decoded on a frame by frame basis and transmitted to a video output 506.

According to the embodiment shown in Fig. 12, the frame by frame feeding of still images is feasible as well as of a motion image. The control of the feeding action is not limited to the embodiment and will be conducted by any applicable manner. It is also possible to locate the memory after the video decoder.

Fig. 13 illustrates a fourth embodiment of the video signal reproducing apparatus according to the present invention. It is a good idea as shown in Fig. 1b that a plurality of different flags are added to the video data. The reproducing apparatus of this em-

embodiment is intended to reproduce a recorded signal multiplexed with both the interlace flag and the still image flag. The signal retrieved by a playback head 120 from a magnetic tape 106 is decoded by a record decoder 501 to a digital data. The digital data is then divided by an interlace flag/still image flag separator 1301 into the interlaced flag, the still image flag, and the video data. The video data is decoded on a field by field basis with a video decoder 504 and transferred to an output mode selector 1303.

The interlace and still image flags are fed to an interlace flag/still image flag detector 1302 where they are used to examine whether or not the video data is interlaced and carries a still image. Simultaneously, a slow-motion switch 1304 delivers a corresponding signal of common motion, slow-motion, or still image mode as determined by an operator of the apparatus.

If it is judged by the output mode selector 1303 that the video data is an interlaced still image and the signal from the switch 1304 indicates the slow-motion or still image mode, the video data is interlaced and transmitted to the video output 506. If it is judged by the output mode selector 1303 that the video data is a non-interlaced or motion image and the signal from the switch 1304 indicates the slow-motion or still image mode, the video data is not interlaced but transmitted directly to the video output 506. The output mode selector 1303 is identical in the construction to that shown in Fig. 6 where the selector 602 is adapted responsive to an output of the interlace flag/still image flag detector 1302.

According to the arrangement shown in Fig. 13, the frame of a still image (of an interlaced video signal) can automatically be reproduced in the slow-motion or still image mode thus providing a higher resolution.

It is understood that the video data encoding, multiplexing, recording data encoding, recorded data decoding, and video data decoding in the embodiments can be implemented by any appropriate manners. The present invention is applicable to not only the magnetic tape recording but also magnetic disk recording, optical disk recording, optomagnetic recording, and other medium recording, and to data transfer through various means including cables. The present invention is not limited to the foregoing embodiments and a combination of some of the embodiments and other arrangements will be possible. A part or section of any embodiment may be implemented by either a hardware or a software.

Any of the described apparatuses may be reduced in cost by selecting between the presence and absence of an interlace flag or a non-interlace flag. Similarly, the still image flag and/or the frame change flag may be prepared to have only constant values. It is also possible that the reproducing apparatus is adapted to perform a reproduction regardless of any

flags.

As set forth above, the recording apparatus and the reproducing apparatus according to the present invention are obviously feasible using simple arrangements and highly suitable for practical use.

Claims

1. A video signal processing method comprising the steps of:
 - assigning a non-interlace value to an interlace flag when two horizontal scanning lines of respective fields of each frame of an input video signal are not interlaced and an interlace value when the same are interlaced; and
 - transmitting or recording video data of the frame accompanied with the interlace flag.
2. A video signal processing method according to claim 1, wherein the interlace value is assigned when it is judged from an externally given video mode information signal that two fields of the frame comprise a frame still image and the non-interlace value is assigned when it is judged that the same constitute two field still images respectively.
3. A video signal processing method according to claim 1, wherein in reproducing a recorded video data and then recording or transmitting it again, the non-interlace value is assigned when the reproduction has been carried out in a slow-motion or still image mode determined by an externally given reproducing mode signal.
4. A video signal processing apparatus comprising:
 - an interlace flag generating means for assigning a non-interlace value to an interlace flag when two horizontal scanning lines of respective fields of each frame of an input video signal are not interlaced and an interlace value when the same are interlaced;
 - a multiplexing means for multiplexing the interlace flag with its relevant video data to produce a multiplexed video signal; and
 - a means for transferring or recording the multiplexed video signal.
5. A video signal processing apparatus according to claim 4, wherein the interlace flag generating means assigns the interlaced value when it is judged from an externally given video mode information signal that two fields of the frame comprise a frame still image and the non-interlace value when it is judged that the same constitute two field still images respectively.

6. A video signal processing apparatus according to claim 4, wherein during reproducing a recorded video data and then recording or transmitting it again, the interlace flag generating means assigns the non-interlace value when the reproduction has been carried out in a slow-motion or still image mode determined by an externally given reproducing mode signal. 5
7. A video signal processing apparatus for receiving or reproducing each recorded frame data accompanied with an interlace flag which indicates that the frame data is either an interlaced signal or a non-interlaced signal, comprising: 10
 - an interlace flag decoding means for examining the interlace flag to determine whether the frame data is an interlaced signal or a non-interlaced signal; 15
 - an interlaced output means for scanning each horizontal line of one field of the frame between two adjacent horizontal lines of the other field when it is judged by the interlace flag decoding means that the frame data is the interlaced signal; and 20
 - a non-interlaced output means operable when it is judged by the interlace flag decoding means that the frame data is the non-interlaced signal for scanning two corresponding horizontal lines of their respective fields of the frame in the same location of a screen or scanning each horizontal line of one field of the frame between two adjacent horizontal lines of the other field and then eliminating unwanted artifacts generated by interlacing with an interline filter. 25
8. A video signal processing method comprising the steps of: 30
 - assigning a still image value to a still image flag when it is judged from an externally given video mode information signal that a data of a frame of a field-based video signal is a still image being still over two fields and a motion-image value when it is judged that the frame data is a motion image varied between two fields; and 35
 - transmitting or recording the frame data accompanied with the still image flag. 40
9. A video signal processing method according to claim 8, wherein the still image flag is maintained to the same value for at least n frame periods (n being an integer more than two). 45
10. A video signal processing method according to claim 9, wherein n is equal to 3 or more. 50
11. A video signal processing apparatus comprising: 55
 - a still image flag generating means for assigning a still image value to a still image flag

when it is judged from an externally given video mode information signal that a video data of a frame of an input video signal is a still image being still over two fields and a motion-image value when it is judged that the same is a motion image varied between two fields;

a multiplexing means for multiplexing the still image flag with the video data of the frame to produce a multiplexed video signal; and

a means for transmitting and recording the multiplexed video signal.

12. A video signal processing apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the still image flag is maintained to the same value for at least n frame periods (n being an integer more than two).
13. A video signal processing apparatus according to claim 12, wherein n is equal to 3 or more.
14. A video signal processing method for transmitting or recording each frame data accompanied with a frame change flag which indicates whether a frame of a still image is identical to or different from a previous frame, comprising the steps of:
 - encoding a video signal of the still image on a frame by frame basis by repeating one still frame for n frame periods (n being an integer more than two); and
 - assigning a different still image data to the frame change flag applied to a first one of the n frames and an identical still image data to a frame change flag applied to each of second to n-th frames.
15. A video signal processing method for reproducing a recorded frame video data accompanied with a frame change flag which indicates whether a frame of a slow-motion or still image is identical to or different from a previous frame, and then transmitting or recording the same, comprising the steps of:
 - repeating a same frame n times (n being an integer more than two) for reproducing the slow-motion or still image; and
 - assigning a different still image data to a frame change flag applied to a first one of the n frames and an identical still image data to a frame change flag applied to each of the second to n-th frames.
16. A video signal processing apparatus for transmitting or recording a still image comprising:
 - a frame change flag generating means for repeating a same frame of a still image for n frame periods (n being an integer more than two) and assigning a different still image value to a frame change flag applied to a first one of the n

frames and an identical still image value to a frame change flag applied to each of second to n-th frames, the frame change flag being indicative of whether a still image frame is identical to or different from a previous frame;

a multiplexing means for multiplexing the frame change flag with the video data of the frame to produce a multiplexed video signal; and

a means for transmitting or recording the multiplexed video signal.

17. A video signal processing apparatus for reproducing a recorded video data and then transmitting or recording the same, comprising:

a frame change flag generating means for repeating a same frame of a slow-motion or a still image determined by a reproducing mode signal from the video data for n frame periods (n being an integer more than two) and assigning a different still image value to a frame change flag applied to a first one of the n frames and an identical still image value to a frame change flag applied to each of second to n-th frames, the frame change flag being indicative of whether a still image frame is identical to or different from a previous frame;

a multiplexing means for multiplexing the frame change flag with the video data of the frame to produce a multiplexed video signal; and

a means for transmitting or recording the multiplexed video signal.

18. A video signal processing apparatus for reproducing a transmitted or recorded data accompanied with a frame change flag which indicates whether or not a present frame of a video signal is identical to a previous frame before transmitting or recording n frames (n being an integer more than two) in succession, comprising:

a frame change flag detecting means for examining the frame change flag to compare the present frame with its adjacent frame for an error concealment of a data in the present frame with a corresponding data of any neighbor frame; and

an error concealment means for performing an error concealment by interpolating with a corresponding data of a frame which is determined to be identical to the present frame.

19. A video signal processing apparatus for reproducing a transmitted or recorded data accompanied with a frame change flag which indicates whether or not a present frame of a video signal is identical to a previous frame before transmitting or recording n frames (n being an integer more than two) in a succession, comprising:

a frame change flag detecting means for examining the frame change flag to determine

whether or not the present frame is identical to the previous frame; and

a frame output means operable when a still image at the present is repeatedly required by a still image selection message for delivering a video data of a frame which is identical to its previous frame as determined by the frame change flag detecting means and operable when another still image is requested for delivering a video data of a frame which is different from its previous frame as determined by the frame change flag detecting means or its succeeding frame.

20. A video signal processing apparatus for reproducing in a slow-motion or still image mode a frame video data accompanied with an interlace flag indicative of whether the frame video data is interlaced or not and a still image flag indicative of whether or not the frame video data is a slow-motion or still image over two consecutive fields, comprising:

a flag decoding means for decoding both the interlace and still image flags; and

a reproducing means operable when it is judged by the flag decoding means that the frame data is an interlaced still image for reproducing the frame video data as a frame still slow-motion or still image.

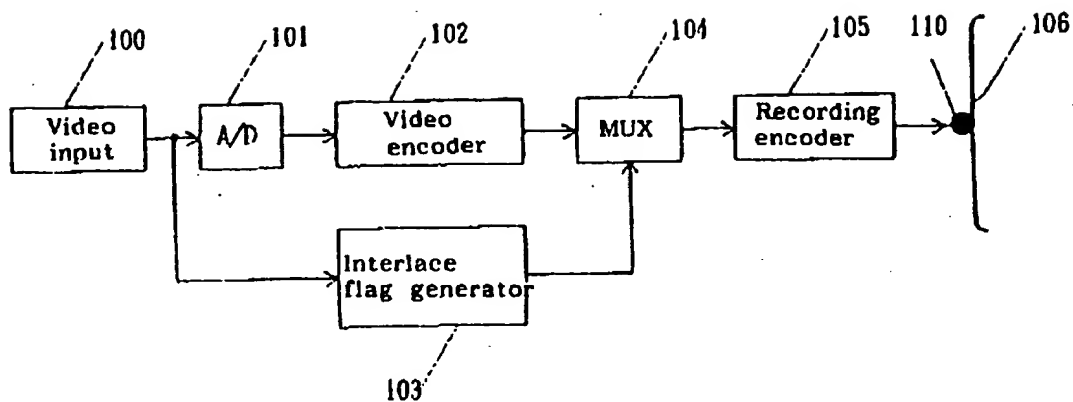


Fig. 1a

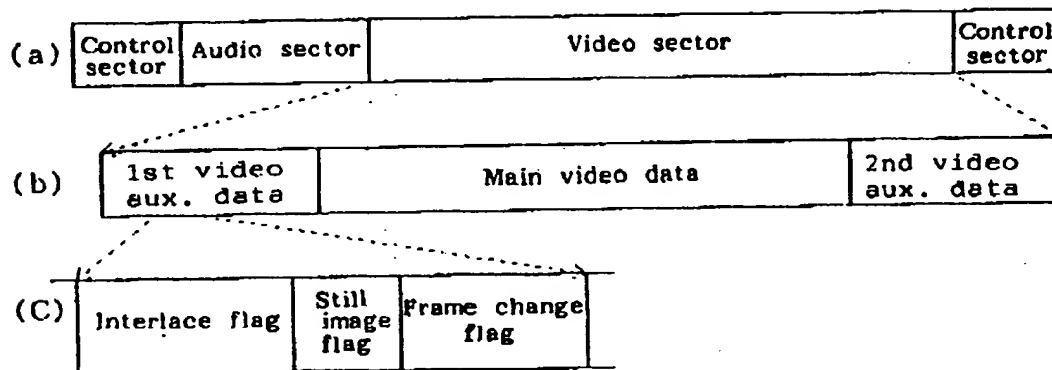


Fig. 1b

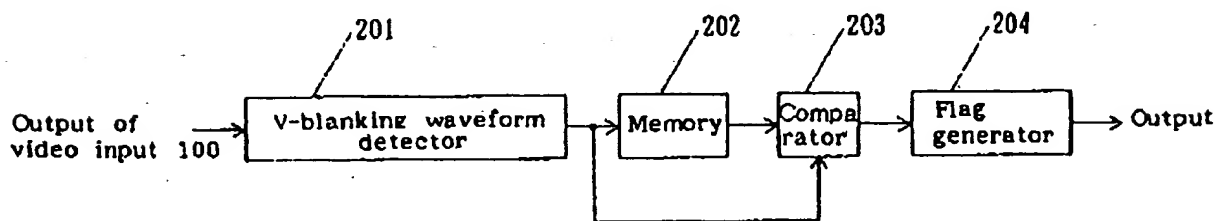


Fig. 2

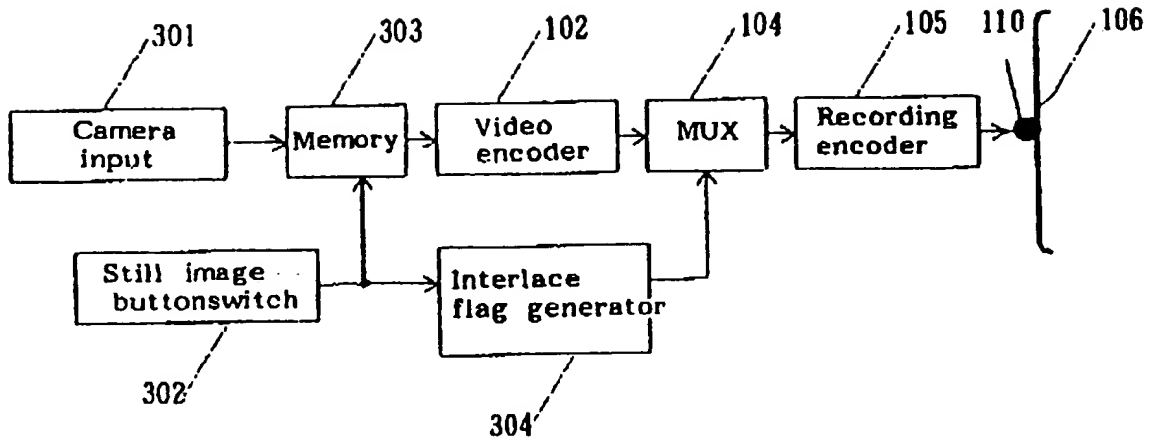


Fig. 3

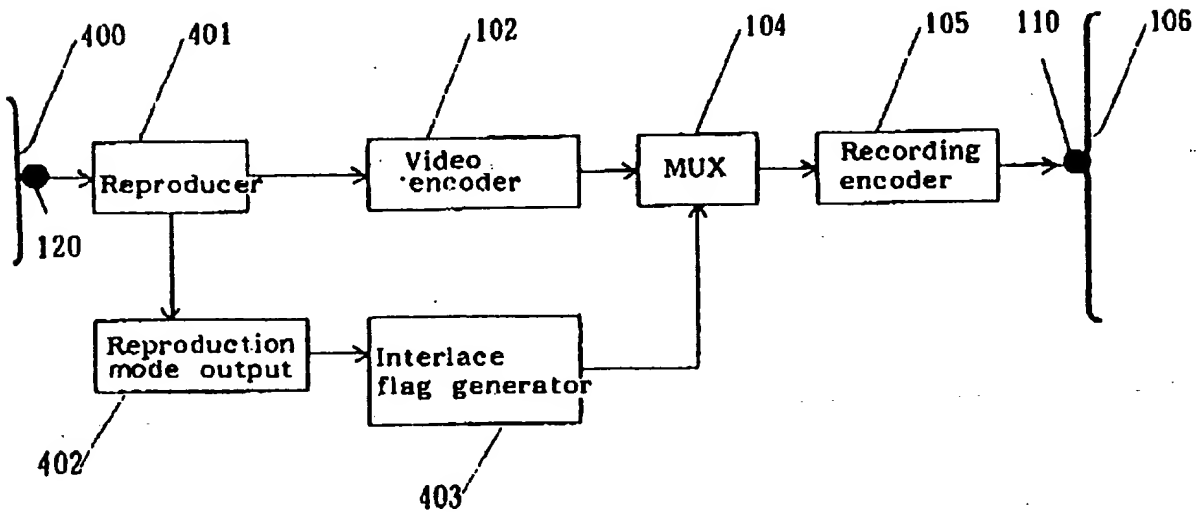


Fig. 4

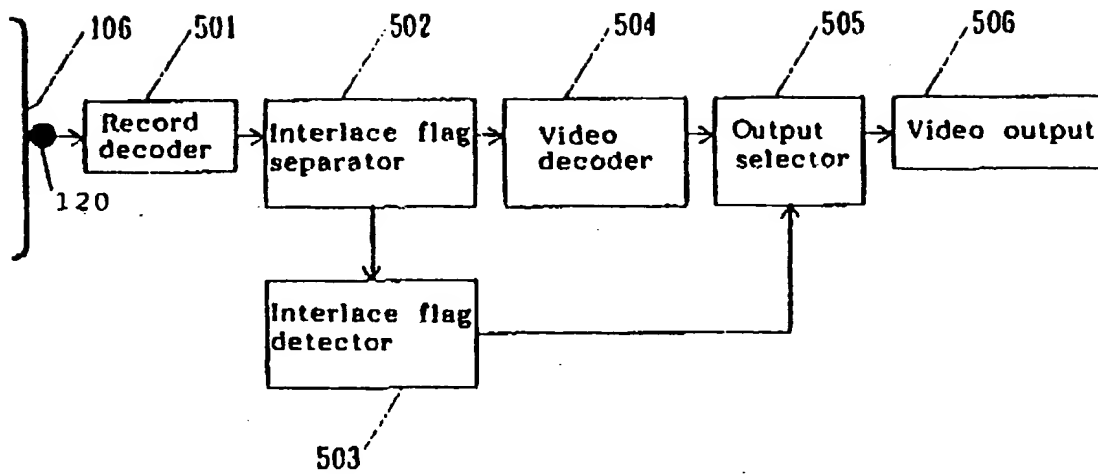


Fig. 5

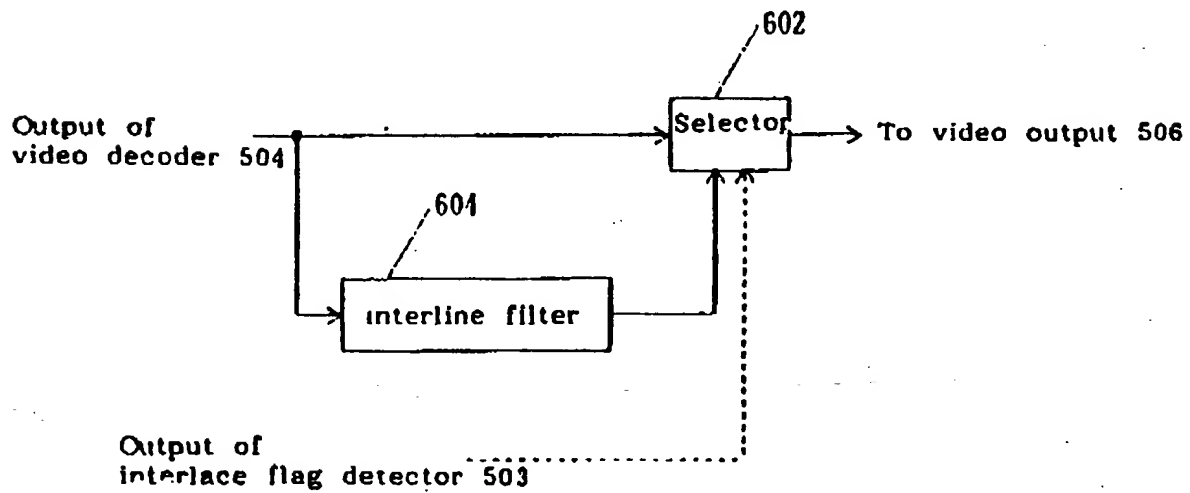


Fig. 6

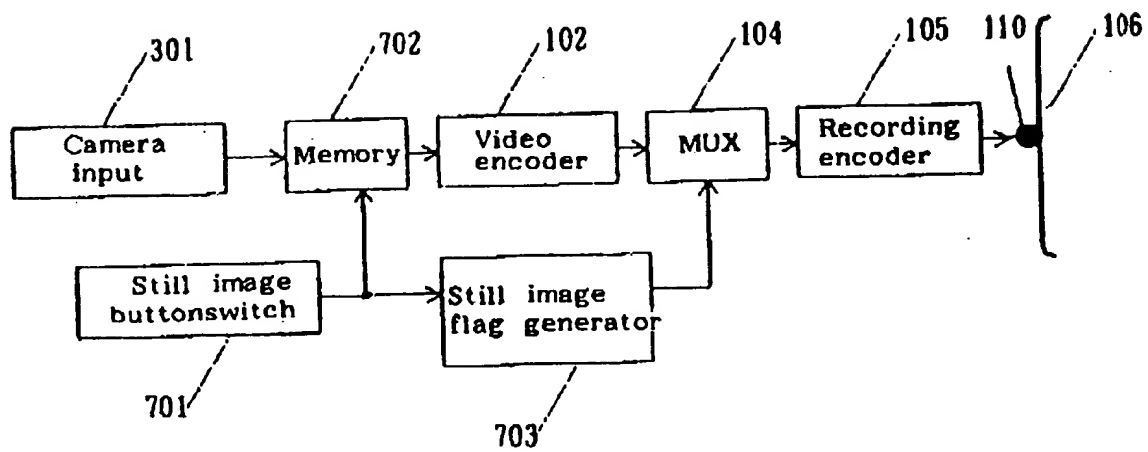


Fig. 7

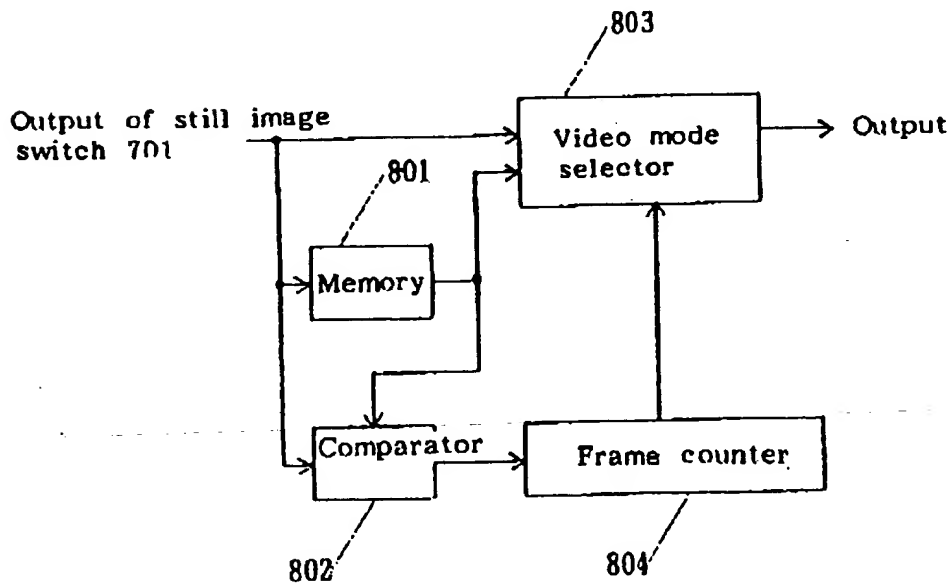


Fig. 8

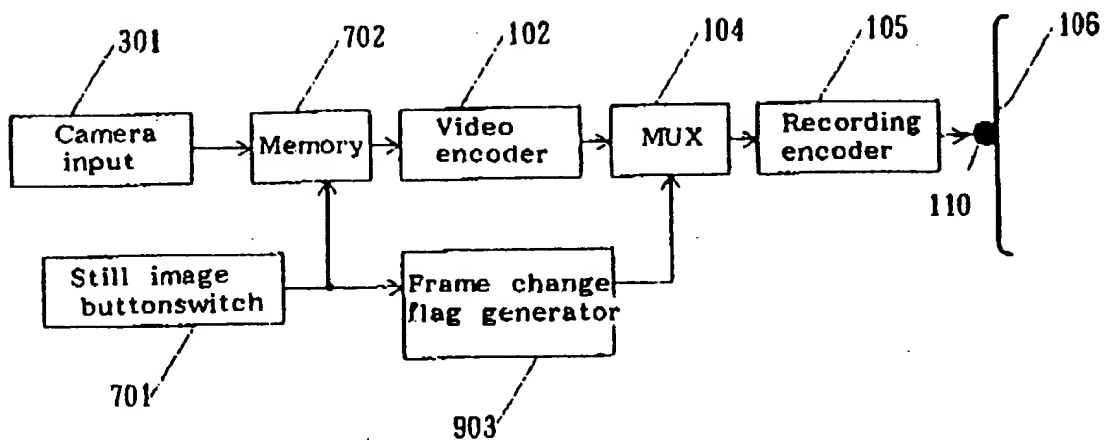


Fig. 9

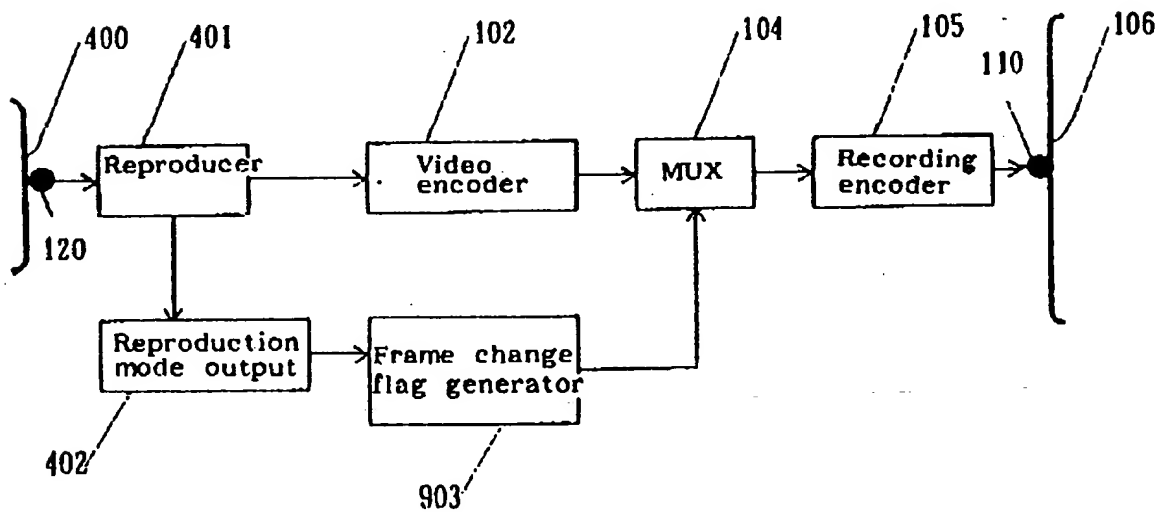


Fig. 10

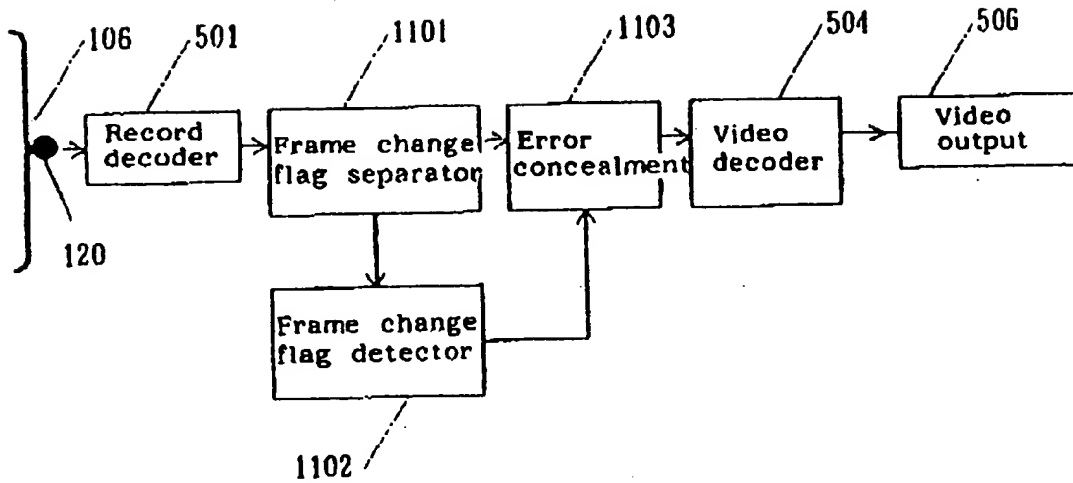


Fig. 11

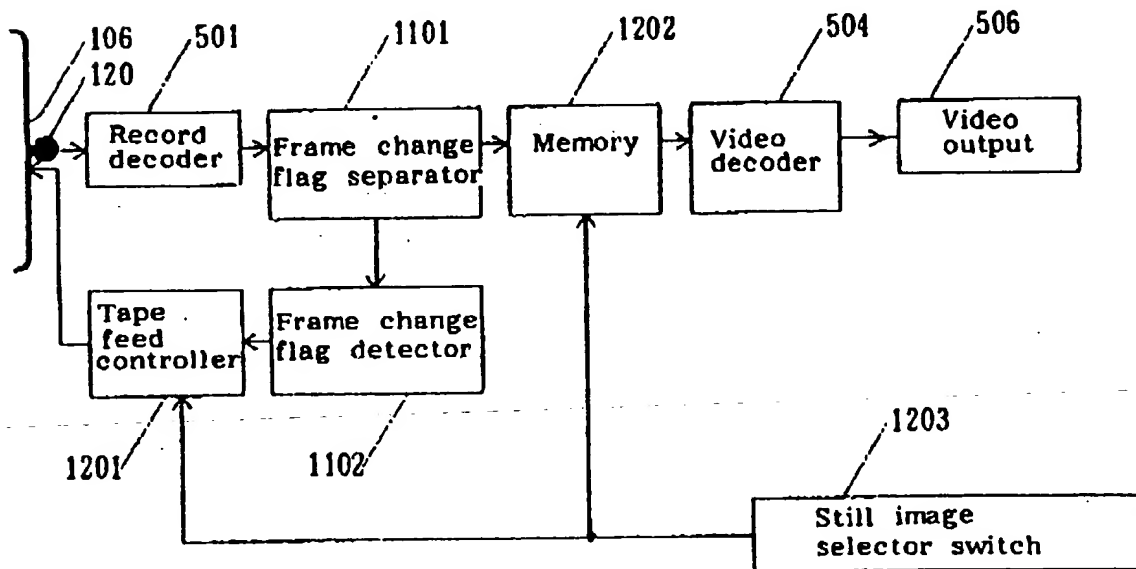


Fig. 12

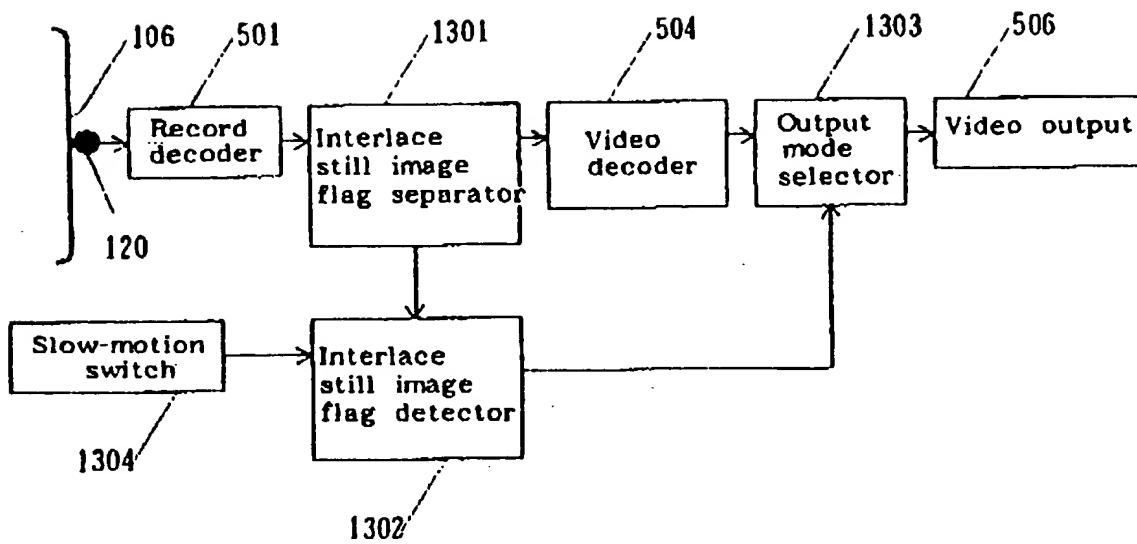


Fig. 13



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Publication number : **0 633 693 A3**

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EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION

21 Application number : **94304701.9**

51 Int. Cl.⁶ : **H04N 5/92, H04N 7/26**

22 Date of filing : **28.06.94**

30 Priority : **01.07.93 JP 163418/93**
08.07.93 JP 168901/93

43 Date of publication of application :
11.01.95 Bulletin 95/02

84 Designated Contracting States :
DE FR GB NL

88 Date of deferred publication of search report :
17.05.95 Bulletin 95/20

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54 **Flagged video signal recording apparatus and reproducing apparatus.**

57 A video data is accompanied or multiplexed with one or more flags indicating a relation between fields or frames of video data for transmission or recording. An interface flag determines whether the video data is interlaced or not. A still image flag determines whether the video data carries a motion image, a field still image, or a frame still image. A frame change flag determines whether or not a given frame of the still image is identical to its previous frame. At least one of the three different flags is multiplexed with its relevant video data.

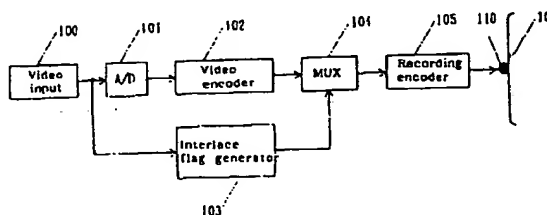


Fig. 1a

EP 0 633 693 A3



European Patent
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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 94 30 4701

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cl.6)
P,X	EP-A-0 595 323 (SONY) 4 May 1994 * column 15, line 46 - column 17, line 41; figures 10,11 *	1,4,7	H04N5/92 H04N7/54
A	EP-A-0 381 222 (SANYO) * page 4, line 33 *	1,4,7	
A	PATENT ABSTRACTS OF JAPAN vol. 17, no. 331 (E-1386) 23 June 1993 & JP-A-05 037 900 (SONY) 12 February 1993 * abstract *	1,4,7	
P,A	& US-A-5 343 248 (FUJINAMI) 30 August 1994 * abstract *	1,4,7	
A	NHK LABORATORIES NOTE, no.348, July 1987, TOKYO JP pages 1 - 34 NINOMIYA ET AL 'CONCEPT OF THE MUSE SYSTEM AND ITS PROTOCOL' * page 27, paragraph 6.1 * page 29, table A1, bit no. 24	8,11	
A	EP-A-0 522 522 (CANON) * the whole document *	14-20	
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 15 March 1995	Examiner Yvonnet, J
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